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I. Organizational matters

1. The annual session 2014 of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 23 to 27 June 2014.

2. The Executive Board approved the agenda and workplan for its annual session 2014 (DP/2014/L.2), and approved the report of the first regular session 2014 (DP/2014/9).

3. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at the annual session 2014 appeared in document DP/2014/19, which was available on the Executive Board website.

4. The Executive Board agreed in decision 2014/23 to the following schedule for future sessions of the Executive Board in 2014:

Second regular session 2014: 2 to 5 September 2014

UNDP segment

II. Statement by the Administrator and annual report of the Administrator

5. In her opening remarks to the Executive Board (available on the Executive Board website), the Administrator highlighted the importance of 2014 for UNDP. Throughout its headquarters, regional and country office network, the organization was in the process of rolling out the new strategic plan, 2014-2017, against which programmes were being aligned, and was undertaking a significant organizational change process to ensure UNDP was fit for purpose to deliver on the plan and address 21st century development challenges.

6. She opened her remarks with a video presentation on UNDP support to Lebanon and Jordan as they addressed the Syria refugee crisis. She briefed Board members on UNDP crisis-related work in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, as well as on recovery efforts in post-typhoon Philippines. She also informed them of the UNDP response to the situation in Iraq in light of the renewed conflict and instability, stressing that the UNDP role was to support recovery from crisis and to build the foundations for long-term stability and development.

7. At the global level, UNDP was supporting the process of designing the post-2015 development agenda, and continued to hope for sustainable development goals that were easy to communicate, action-oriented, achievable, and limited in number. UNDP was actively involved in preparations for the Climate Summit in September 2014 and in supporting countries and partners in taking bold steps to devise mitigation and adaptation strategies and actions, particularly through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

8. The Administrator highlighted the importance UNDP attached to promoting and mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation in its work, as reflected in the UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017. UNDP was in the process of developing a new South-South cooperation corporate strategy and was committed to hosting and supporting the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

9. Turning to the annual report on the strategic plan: performance and results for 2013 (DP/2014/11), the Administrator noted that UNDP work in 2013 had taken place within the context of uneven growth and rising inequality. The organization continued to push for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the promotion of inclusive pro-poor growth. The annual report presented UNDP performance and results in the final year of the 2008-2013 strategic plan and for the first time included reporting on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development. The annual report was

aligned with the strategic plan's three new areas of work: (a) sustainable development pathways; (b) strengthening inclusive and effective democratic governance; and (c) building resilience. The Administrator highlighted results achieved in 2013 under each of those three areas.

10. On the organizational restructuring, the Administrator stressed that its purpose was to ensure that UNDP was equipped to deliver on its strategic plan successfully. UNDP had already made significant shifts in headquarters to regional service centre ratios, aimed at strengthening regional presence and moving closer to country offices. It had created two new groupings: the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, aligning policy and programme in one bureau, and a separate Crisis Response Unit. The new set up offered clear presentation of how and where services were performed with clear accountability; further opportunities for standardization and less duplication would follow. Noting that the change was not easy on staff, management had designed the restructuring to ensure fairness and transparency, while keeping the Staff Council fully engaged and the Board informed.

11. The Administrator highlighted the organization's commitment to transparency and accountability, as reflected in its public disclosure of internal audit reports, and its first place transparency ranking among multilateral development organizations in the most recent Aid Transparency Index.

12. The Administrator stressed that a strong culture of collaboration throughout the United Nations development system was essential for it to be fit for purpose in the post-2015 world. UNDP commitment to that culture was clearly reflected in its new strategic plan. She pointed to notable reform advances, such as the development of a Delivering-as-One monitoring and evaluation framework, a set of minimum requirements for countries wanting to adopt Delivering-as-One, and the implementation of system-wide cost-sharing of the resident coordinator system by United Nations Development Group members, which took effect in January 2014.

13. In referring to the report of UNDP on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2013 (DP/2014/11/Add.1 and Add.2), the Administrator stressed that the JIU had reaffirmed that a robust and rigorous selection and appointment process was in place for resident coordinators, and encouraged United Nations organizations to make a diverse cross-section of their top talent available for resident coordinator postings.

14. Across the board, delegations commended the Administrator for her leadership and UNDP for its results in 2013 in its three areas of work. They found the annual report useful and its approach innovative, and appreciated the inclusion of a 'report card' and the bridging of the previous and current strategic plans. They welcomed the annual report's attention to gender, progress in inclusive and effective democratic governance, and resilience-building in fragile states, and commended UNDP for its disaster risk reduction work. They appreciated UNDP reporting on its extensive global activities and on its contribution to United Nations development system results and implementation of the quadrennial review. However, some board members highlighted that in certain policy and budget areas, it was difficult to determine the organization's actual contribution. They wished to see more on UNDP challenges and lessons learned, and how the organization would address them in future programming. They recognized UNDP efforts to build and improve its monitoring and reporting capacities, and urged it to build on findings of recent evaluations.

15. Delegations stated that the organization's vision and work in its three key areas were integral to the post-2015 development agenda. They encouraged UNDP to work closely with Member States and other partners in making the new development agenda concise and transformative, grounded in the principles of effective development cooperation and flexible in adapting to national and local contexts. They further encouraged UNDP to build on its experience of capturing citizens' voices through the My World surveys and feeding them into global development debates.

16. Noting the progress reported against the quadrennial review, they underlined that stronger harmonization and cooperation were basic preconditions for UNDP and the United Nations to deliver effectively. They expressed their strong support for the structural review process, which they considered a necessary step in making UNDP stronger, more effective and a continued leader on the development front. Considering the implications for staff, however, they urged UNDP to keep staff informed in a timely manner, and encouraged UNDP to continue to engage with and keep the Board informed throughout the process.

17. One delegation, speaking on behalf of a number of countries, stressed the importance of grounding UNDP work in the quadrennial review, which gave UNDP the explicit mandate to prioritize poverty eradication as its overarching objective. UNDP should likewise work to ensure that the poverty eradication focus figured at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda. They reiterated that UNDP interventions should be demand driven and adapted to local conditions.

18. The same group of countries encouraged UNDP to give high priority to promoting and implementing South-South cooperation and facilitating the transfer of technology towards developing countries, whose purpose was distinct from and complementary to traditional North-South cooperation. They were keen to see United Nations organizations mainstream South-South cooperation in their development work. They called on UNDP to increase its human and financial support to the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation so that it could effectively implement its mandate.

19. Another group of delegations stressed the importance of maintaining the organization's universal presence in developing countries, and highlighted the continuing need for UNDP in middle-income countries and upper middle-income countries. Several delegations continued to raise concern over the declining regular (core) resource base, which was especially critical for the least development countries and small island developing states, and urged Member States to raise their level of contributions. Pointing to the rapidly emerging new international development landscape, a number of countries stressed the need for UNDP to diversify its financing base.

20. A group of Board members requested that the Executive Board reconsider the practice of holding its annual session in Geneva every other year. Moving delegations from New York to Geneva incurred unnecessary costs, had no added substantive value and ran contrary to the practice of the other United Nations organizations, which held all their annual sessions in New York.

21. In response, the Administrator assured delegations that UNDP would work to improve its performance reporting, and build on the experience of the report card. She noted that UNDP would always make poverty eradication its top priority and was working closely with Member States to ensure it figured prominently within the post-2015 framework. UNDP also took South-South cooperation seriously and, in accordance with decision 18/1 of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, was committed to supporting the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

22. The Administrator noted that UNDP had taken the lead in supporting countries to accelerate the MDGs and would bring the lessons learned into the sustainable development goals. On concerns over core resources, she stressed the need for further discussion around critical mass and structured funding. Recognizing delegations' call to strengthen the resident coordinator system, she informed them that UNDP recruited the manager of the resident coordinator assessment centre through official procurement channels. She highlighted that while leadership was an important asset for a resident coordinator, UNDP needed to place more importance on development acumen. She thanked delegations for their strong support for the UNDP structural review, including efforts to move closer to the regional and country levels, and assured them that management was keeping staff regularly informed of progress. She assured

Board members that in line with decision 2013/28 on the integrated budget, 2014-2017, UNDP would continue to maintain a physical presence in upper middle-income and middle-income countries on the basis of appropriate funding arrangements.

23. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/10 on the report of the Administrator on the strategic plan: performance and results for 2013.

24. The Executive Board took note of the report of UNDP on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2013 (DP/2014/11/Add.1) and the statistical annex (DP/2014/11/Add.2).

III. UNDP strategic plan, 2104-2017

25. As part of her opening statement, the Administrator informed the Board that UNDP was pursuing rigorous implementation of its new strategic plan, 2014-2017. As part of its drive for greater programme effectiveness, UNDP was aligning all its progammes worldwide to the vision, principles, parameters and performance ambitions of the new strategic plan. The aim of the alignment was not only to achieve focused, high quality programming that delivered better results in a cost-effective manner, but also to institutionalize a systematic approach to implementing future strategic plans.

26. UNDP had already made significant strides in aligning its global and regional programmes, while its alignment at the country level was grounded in respect for national priorities and its existing commitments. UNDP investments and efforts at the country level – including the issuance of technical guidance on alignment, completion of self-assessment surveys, and an alignment toolkit – promised higher quality UNDP engagement in country programme planning and in the post-2015 development agenda process.

27. The main tool for measuring UNDP performance under the strategic plan, 2014-2017, was the integrated results and resources framework, which, the Administrator reported, UNDP was in the process of populating with baselines, annual milestones and multi-year targets. It was the first integrated framework showing the connection between development and management results and the link between resources and results. As such, it demonstrated the organization's determination to become more focused, results-driven, effective and efficient, with better monitoring and greater accountability.

28. Noting that UNDP would continue to improve the integrated framework, the Administrator thanked Board members and the External Peer Review Group for their ongoing constructive engagement. UNDP would continue to streamline and populate the framework, relying on national engagement and statistical capacities, while working to improve its own data collection and evidenced-based monitoring capacities. She would share the outcome of those UNDP efforts with the Board in the first results report for the new strategic plan, 2014-2017, at the annual session 2015.

29. Board members were pleased with the close consultations that UNDP had organized with them in developing both the new strategic plan, 2014-2017, and the integrated results and resources framework, which they viewed as a significant improvement from the previous draft framework and a milestone in transforming the organization. They called on UNDP to finalize the integrated framework for informal presentation at the first regular session 2015, with an update on the alignment of country results reporting, followed by further refinement of baselines and targets in a limited way as implementation evolved.

30. Overall, delegations appreciated the focus on results-based management and evidenced-based programming in the strategic plan and integrated framework. They recognized in particular the links between global and country-level outcomes, the production of global indicators and UNDP efforts in data collection and analysis, which would greatly improve accountability for results and internal decision-making. They called on UNDP to invest further

in refining and quantifying the indicators and in building monitoring and reporting capacities, especially at the country office level. They welcomed the introduction of gender disaggregated indicators, which they said would lead the way for the United Nations development system to use gender-disaggregated data and contribute to a better understanding of the impact of their work for women. They suggested improvements to the integrated framework, including reducing the indicators to a manageable number and enhancing methods for monitoring gender results. They also encouraged UNDP to update the theory of change documents appropriately.

31. A group of delegations stressed that UNDP should prioritize poverty eradication in its programming. While noting that the strategic plan and the integrated framework were evolving documents, they underlined the importance of using internationally agreed indicators and results consistent with the goals and targets of the future post-2015 development agenda to the extent possible, and to consult with programme countries when assessing performance.

32. In response, the Administrator highlighted the significant effort that UNDP had undertaken in developing the results and resources framework and the data analysis connected to it. She indicated that UNDP was keen to stabilize the process around the integrated framework as soon as possible and finalize it in time for the first regular session 2015. She noted, however, that UNDP would continue to populate and refine the data over time. She assured delegations that UNDP indicators reflected international standards and its progress measures were based on available statistical information at the national level. UNDP, she noted, would continue to seek to harmonize results reporting with other United Nations organizations. On improving the collection and analysis of data on development, she pointed to UNDP collaboration with the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Post-2015 Development Planning and the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs on how the United Nations system could support the 'data revolution' associated with the new development agenda. She assured Board members, in closing, that UNDP fully supported the Group of 7+ countries as well as the 'new deal' agenda for resilience and peacebuilding.

33. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/11 on the integrated results and resources framework of the UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017.

IV. Human Development Report

34. In line with General Assembly resolution 57/264, the Director, Human Development Report Office, presented an update on Human Development Report consultations.

35. Board members were pleased with the 2014 topic choices of vulnerability and resilience and sought clarity on how they were chosen. Two delegations raised concern over the methodology used in calculating the human development index, and advised UNDP to consult with Member States before publishing methodological changes. They urged UNDP to respect national political systems when updating statistics and to revert to national statistics whenever national statistical institutions met the principles and best practices adopted by the Economic and Social Council. It was also crucial that UNDP took into account and built on the experiences of developing countries. Overall, delegations underlined the importance of transparency and consistency in adopting methodology and selecting data. They also sought clarity on how human development indicators were designed and how they differed from other growth indicators. One delegation, pointing to the difficulties facing the least developed countries, sought concrete recommendations on how they could achieve higher levels of development.

36. In response, the Director, Human Development Report Office, clarified that the office did not collect data and indicators from national institutions but from international institutions mandated to do so in a given field. He noted that while human development indices were taken from official data, they were often complemented with other statistics. He pointed out that the

2013 report included both human development and gross domestic product indicators. On the issue of inclusive societies, because recent data had shown that cohesive societies performed better than non-cohesive societies, the report sought to clarify the conditions that made a society inclusive and responsive. Likewise, the report's analytical process focused on factors that made some countries, such as least developed countries, more vulnerable and less able to achieve higher levels of development. He noted in closing that the report's topics were chosen following internal debate and discussion.

37. The Executive Board took note of the oral report on consultations regarding the 2015 *Human Development Report* in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/264.

V. United Nations Capital Development Fund

38. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, introduced the item. The Executive Secretary, ad interim, United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), presented an overview of the Fund's activities in 2013. The Director, Local Development Programme Finance Area, UNCDF, presented the report on results achieved by UNCDF in 2013 (DP/2014/12), including the integrated results and resources framework, 2014-2017, and its methodological note.

39. Board members commended UNCDF for its tangible results in the least developed countries. They appreciated its work in developing innovative financing and programme solutions in places other development institutions often overlooked, in particular its investments in inclusive finance and local development finance. They highlighted its critical role as an incubator, early investor and catalyser, using its flexible investment mandate to form investment partnerships and model investment opportunities that governments or other institutions could in turn scale up. Such efforts helped to strengthen the ownership and accountability of local governments, enhance public service delivery, improve livelihoods, and reinforce value chains. They emphasized the importance of providing those services in a stable, well-regulated environment. They looked forward to regular evaluations and audits of the Fund's activities and called on UNDP and UNCDF to consult with the Executive Board during transition processes when recruiting the Fund's new Executive Secretary.

40. Delegations were keen to see UNCDF continue to fill its unique mandate in international aid architecture, especially in discussions on how to finance the post-2015 development agenda. Rising contributions from both the public and private sectors were an indication that the Fund's strategic framework and working modalities were on track. A group of countries stressed that despite the lingering effects of the 2008 financial crisis, contributions to UNCDF core resources had led to tangible, cost-effective results that were improving the lives of many poor, especially in the least developed countries, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. They called on countries in a position to do so to increase contributions to the Fund's core resource base, which would ensure its continued activities in all 40 least developed countries. They also encouraged the Fund to step up its cooperation with the private sector, World Bank and the International Finance Corporation.

41. In response, the Associate Administrator, UNDP, assured Board members that the recruitment process for the new Executive Secretary was underway and would soon be finalized.

42. The Director, Local Development Programme Finance Area, UNCDF, pointed to the success of the micro-lead programme in mobilizing investments and savings in poor and crisis countries. The programme supported the transition of successful micro-programmes in developing countries to more riskier environments in crisis and post-crisis countries. There were a variety of investment instruments that the Fund would continue to use and explore in areas such as clean energy, off-grid energy, agribusiness, and climate finance. UNCDF would

continue to engage with partners to increase its core resource base and enhance its efficiency and effectiveness.

43. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/12 on the report on results achieved by UNCDF in 2013.

VI. United Nations Volunteers

44. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, presented the report of the Administrator on United Nations Volunteers (UNV) (DP/2014/13) and its annexes: the statistical overview, the financial overview, and the strategic framework and integrated results and resources matrix, 2014-2017. The Executive Coordinator, UNV, provided an overview of the organization's results in 2012-2013, strategic direction and partnerships.

45. Board members showed strong support for the work of UNV in 2012-2013, its strategic framework, 2014-2017, and the integrated results and resources matrix, which gave the organization a stronger results-based culture. They expected UNV to be fully engaged in the development of the post-2015 development agenda and to revise and strengthen the strategic plan and matrix as the post-2015 agenda evolved. They welcomed the mainstreaming of volunteerism-related language in key global documents, and looked forward to the General Assembly mandated 2015 plan of action to 'integrate volunteerism in peace and development in the next decade and beyond'.

46. Overall, delegations were pleased with the scope and variety of UNV results and activities. The new plan and matrix served as guiding instruments in promoting greater coherence between international volunteering programmes and development cooperation priorities. They urged UNV to create a strong oversight mechanism for the plan and matrix to ensure implementation in line with quadrennial review principles. They commended UNV for promoting national level volunteerism schemes and national legislation for volunteerism, and encouraged it to continue to foster the mainstreaming of volunteerism in the strategic frameworks of United Nations development organizations, including in joint programmes. They were especially pleased with the integration of volunteerism in some twenty United Nations development assistance frameworks, a trend they hoped to see grow in the future.

47. Board members noted that UNV work to tackle development issues through the promotion of volunteerism strengthened multiculturalism, peacebuilding and peacekeeping, and fostered a better understanding of peoples worldwide. They were pleased to see UNV engagement in issues related to gender and the social inclusion of youth, and noted that training and formation of volunteers created a direct link with civil society. They recognized the UNV contribution to South-South cooperation, with the large majority of UN-Volunteers coming from the global South. They encouraged UNV to continue to build the capacity of new volunteers and explore new technologies for the recruitment and training of volunteers.

48. Delegations commended the organization for its evaluation activities and appreciated its joining the global South-South and triangular cooperation network, EvalPartners. They encouraged UNV to continue to broaden its regional and national knowledge networks and tighten its proximity to local communities. They underlined the importance of culling and maintaining UN-Volunteers' knowledge and experience, and for UNV to be a vehicle for the systematization of good practices in the field of organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

49. Delegations appreciated UNV partnership building efforts and the signing of memoranda of understanding with United Nations organizations and governments. One delegation stressed however that clear parameters were needed to guide UNV partnerships with the private sector to prevent conditionalities and to guarantee respect for national sovereignty. Board members welcomed the rise in donor contributions to UNV direct programme activities, thanks to the

deployment of more fully funded UN-Volunteers. However, they noted with concern that contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund had fallen to levels lower than the previous biennium. They called on countries in a position to do so to increase their financial support to the fund.

50. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Department of Field Support highlighted their close and mutually beneficial working relationships with UNV, and noted UN-Volunteers' substantive contribution to their respective areas of work, which often took place in difficult settings and in which UNV embodied the values of the United Nations. They highlighted the high numbers and critical roles of UN-Volunteers in their organizations, and pledged their continued collaboration with UNV.

51. In response, the Executive Coordinator, UNV, assured Board members that the UNV strategic framework, 2014-2017, and integrated results and resources matrix were fully aligned with the UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017, and the quadrennial review. On the issues of knowledge management and evaluation, the challenge was to measure the differentiated impact that UN-Volunteers (who were situated in other United Nations organizations) had in support of the United Nations. UNV was committed to boosting its monitoring and evaluation capacity to better capture its results. He recognized delegations' appreciation for the youth volunteering modality, and volunteer engagement with and empowering of local communities. On the Special Voluntary Fund, he noted the importance of expanding its mandate to allow for the scaling-up and replication of successful pilot projects – which was done at the request of partners. He concluded by recognizing the growing UNV cooperation with emerging economies, and its continuing close collaboration with other United Nations organizations.

52. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/13 on report of the Administrator on United Nations Volunteers.

VII. Evaluation

53. The Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP, presented the annual report on evaluation, 2013 (DP/2014/14). The Associate Administrator, UNDP, presented the management commentaries to the annual report on evaluation, 2013.

54. Board members welcomed the work of the Independent Evaluation Office in 2013 and UNDP support since its establishment. They commended UNDP management for promoting a corporate culture of evaluation to improve programme performance. Delegations welcomed the initiative of the Independent Evaluation Office to create the Independent Evaluation Advisory Panel and encouraged Panel members to collaborate with the Independent Evaluation Office and the Executive Board. They commended the office for its commitment and the Director for his leadership in ensuring the highest evaluation standards.

55. Delegations highlighted the role of the annual report on evaluation in helping the Board to reflect on its recommendations. They encouraged the Independent Evaluation Office to include a final section in future reports on lessons and challenges. They stressed the importance of maintaining an independent evaluation function and the need for adequate funding to guarantee its independence, and highlighted the importance of external assessments of the office. They commended the office for its success in ensuring compliance with the highest international evaluation standards, and encouraged it to improve its transparency of compliance through a better tracking system and a better recommendation classification system.

56. Delegations were pleased with the higher number of decentralized evaluations conducted by country offices in 2013, especially in Africa. Concerned however with the quality of those evaluations, they emphasized the need to support country offices in building evaluators'

monitoring and evaluation capacities. They pointed to the need to address the issues of human rights and gender equality in future decentralized evaluations, as per United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) guidelines. They looked forward to a detailed assessment of those issues in the 2014 review of the UNDP evaluation policy.

57. On the issue of country-level evaluations, delegations requested updates on the review of assessments of development results and encouraged the Independent Evaluation Office to hone its methods for efficiency analysis. They agreed with the approach to the assessments and looked forward to more assessments in the run up to country programme finalization. They commended the office's support in building national and regional evaluation capacities and welcomed its commitment to reducing the rate of overdo management responses to decentralized evaluations. They encouraged UNDP senior management to work with the office to build programme country evaluation capacities, and urged the office and UNDP to work with partners to share practices and establish common strategies.

58. Board members welcomed the UNDP management commentaries on the annual report but suggested future commentaries focus on the report's content. They appreciated management's efforts to encourage a stronger learning-oriented dissemination strategy for evaluation findings and recommendations. However, they sought clarification on what management was doing to disseminate and monitor that strategy. They encouraged UNDP to improve the quality of its management responses and to build a stronger evaluation learning culture.

59. In his response, the Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP, noted that the office worked through conferences and events between conferences to build national capacities. The office collaborated closely with UNDP country offices to ensure their collaboration with programme countries in building national evaluation capacities and evaluative literacy. The office partnered with EvalPartners and UNEG as well. He assured delegations that future annual reports would benefit from better diagnostic analysis. On measuring efficiency and impact, he underlined the importance of having better monitoring capacity, an issue the 2014 UNDP policy review could help to resolve. Pointing to the complexities of conducting assessments of development results, he stressed the need to employ a streamlined approach that drew on multiple sources of information. He noted in conclusion that UNDP uptake of evaluation results was very high against international standards, and was working to improve quality.

60. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, assured delegations that UNDP was making every effort to track evaluations and was set to launch an interactive database of evaluation findings in autumn 2014. On the funding of the evaluation function, UNDP was awaiting the results of the UNDP evaluation policy review at the end of 2014. Building on the success of evaluations in Africa, UNDP was able to enhance its decentralized evaluations through a stronger roster of evaluators, better terms of reference and reinforced monitoring and evaluation capacity.

61. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/14 on the annual report on evaluation, 2013.

VIII. Country programmes and related matters

62. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, introduced the item and presented the extension of country programmes for Algeria, Argentina, Lebanon, Libya and Uganda (DP/2014/15). The regional directors for Africa, the Arab States, and Latin America and the Caribbean elaborated on the draft country programmes and the extensions from their respective regional perspectives.

63. The Executive Board reviewed a total of six draft country programmes from three regions: Africa region – Angola, Comoros and Kenya; Arab States region – Kuwait and Tunisia; and Latin America and the Caribbean region – Bolivian Republic of Venezuela.

64. The Executive Board took note of the first one-year extension of the country programmes for Algeria, Argentina, Lebanon, Libya and Uganda for a period of one year, from 1 January to

31 December 2015 (DP/2015/15). The Board approved the two-year extension of the country programme for Botswana, from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2016. The Executive Board approved, on an exceptional basis, the country programme document for Kenya.

65. The Executive Board took note of the draft country programme documents, and the comments made thereon, for Angola (DP/DCP/AGO/3), Comoros (DP/DCP/COM/2), the State of Kuwait (DP/DCP/KWT/2), Tunisia (DP/DCP/TUN/2), and the Bolivian Republic of Venezuela (DP/DCP/VEN/2).

UNFPA segment

IX. and X. Statement by the Executive Director and annual report of the Executive Director, and UNFPA strategic plan, 2014-2017

66. In his statement to the Executive Board (available on the UNFPA Executive Board website), the Executive Director, UNFPA, thanked the members of the Board for their continued support and feedback, viewed as essential towards achieving results and creating an organization that is fit for purpose and poised to address current and future challenges. In referring to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) at 20 review, which will culminate at the General Assembly Special Session in September 2014, he underscored the considerable progress achieved over the past two decades, and called on member states to take into account the recommendations of the ICPD review, as they engage on the definition of the future sustainable development goals in a crucial year.

67. The Executive Director stressed the need to achieve universal support to human rights, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, and highlighted the persistent discrimination, violence and harmful traditions that affect women and adolescent girls. He noted that in marking the 20th anniversary of ICPD, it was vital to uphold the human rights of women, girls and all young people for their own dignity and well being, as well as to meet future development goals. He also stressed that human rights are the very foundation of development and that the United Nations had a critical role to play in achieving a common understanding of this principle.

68. Turning to the annual report for 2013, the Executive Director noted that UNFPA had achieved significant progress in improving both its strategic focus and its programmatic and operational effectiveness, as reflected in the report. He then shared some of the programmatic and operational results achieved in 2013: in the area of maternal health, UNFPA had supported 38 countries' efforts to strengthen midwifery, and had provided training for more than 10,000 midwives who assist 1.75 million births annually. The new UNFPA family planning strategy "Choices not chance", rolled out in 2013, had enabled 95 countries to improve access to voluntary family planning, and stepped up the availability and choice of contraceptives.

69. The Executive Director highlighted the UNFPA contribution to integrated service delivery through leadership and the documentation of good practices in bringing together action that jointly affects sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention and treatment outcomes. He also stressed the importance of the UNFPA focus on young people, and the development of an adolescent and youth strategy, noting that 71 per cent of country programmes formulated in 2013 included a separate output on youth. On gender equality, UNFPA had supported 123 countries in adopting related international agreements and national laws and policies, and built capacity in 86 countries for the elimination of gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation.

70. He further touched upon the UNFPA contribution to humanitarian response in the context of three large scale emergencies, including 105 lifesaving programmes in 2013, the training of

service providers from over 37 conflict or disaster prone countries on the minimum initial service package for reproductive health in emergencies, and the support provided to the gender based violence information management system in 27 countries. He indicated that UNFPA would continue to integrate preparedness and disaster risk reduction in its development results framework to ensure a more predictable, effective and measurable response, and to achieve sustainable resilience in high-risk countries.

71. The Executive Director recalled the Executive Board request, at the second regular session 2013, that UNFPA develop a framework for regional and global interventions, and indicated that this document and its separate results and resources frameworks was now a revamped mechanism with a clearer strategic focus, stronger results chains and greater accountability.

72. In reporting on the status of UNFPA resource contribution revenue and expenses, he thanked Member States for their continued support, particularly on core contributions, critical to implement the UNFPA strategic plan and allow countries to implement the ICPD agenda. He noted that UNFPA had initiated a series of dialogues with Member States, with a view to improving predictability and flexibility of funding and expanding the donor base.

73. On the topic of human resources, the Executive Director drew attention to the efforts engaged by UNFPA towards the development of a new human resources strategy aligned with the new strategic plan and business model, involving the implementation of change management and leadership development, aimed at maintaining adequate staffing levels and strengthening a culture of accountability.

74. Delegations thanked the Executive Director for his statement and comprehensive report on progress achieved in the final year of the UNFPA strategic plan, 2008-2013, and congratulated him for his outstanding engagement in support of women's health, the empowerment of youth, and gender equality. With attention shifting to the post-2015 agenda, several delegations stated that they counted on UNFPA to ensure that the ICPD vision and its focus on human rights, as well as lessons captured in the ICPD beyond 2014 review, were reflected in the new development agenda.

75. Board members commended UNFPA for its effective contribution to accelerating progress towards achieving MDG 5, and for advances under the Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security; they indicated their continued funding commitment to the programme, given the importance of ensuring that quality life-saving commodities, including contraceptives, are consistently available. Some delegations drew attention to the need to strengthen health systems as a means to increase availability in access to sexual and reproductive health services and called on UNFPA to engage in ensuring that sexual and reproductive health issues are taken up within the broader context of health policies.

76. Delegations applauded UNFPA for prioritizing the needs and rights of the world's largest generation of young people, noting that access to sexuality education and the decisions of young people can make the difference between prosperity and poverty. Some delegations, in reference to the strategic plan outcome related to young adolescent girls cautioned UNFPA to implement this goal in accordance with national laws, and urged UNFPA to balance comprehensive age-appropriate education with abstinence programs that emphasize the risk of pre-marital sexual activity.

77. Certain delegations from Latin American and Caribbean countries reiterated their concern with regard to the new resource allocation system under the strategic plan, and its implications for the implementation of the ICPD agenda, and appealed to the Executive Director to allow for greater flexibility in response to country needs and priorities.

78. Board members appreciated UNFPA work in the context of emergencies, and concurred that UNFPA has a vital role to play in humanitarian contexts, in particular as co-leader of the gender-based violence area of responsibility. They urged UNFPA to work in close collaboration

with partners at central, regional and field levels and use the lessons emerging from the Philippines, South Sudan and the Central African Republic to pursue its robust engagement, in keeping with its commitments. They also appreciated UNFPA leadership role in addressing gender based violence at the recent global summit to end sexual violence in conflict, and looked forward to following up on the commitments made.

79. On the subject of the UNFPA strategic framework for global and regional interventions (GRI), Board members commended UNFPA for the extensive follow up to the audit of the global and regional programme. They welcomed UNFPA enhancement of transparency and accountability, and ensured the Fund that they would continue to support its efforts in this endeavour. Going forward, they encouraged UNFPA to provide additional analysis on how outcomes were achieved, risks handled and lessons learned as part of its regular reporting. They recommended the use of tools that provide a concise report of main organizational results and illustrate the progress under each outcome of the strategic plan results framework, from respective regional and global initiatives. They also welcomed the integration of the GRI as a substantive section of future annual reports.

80. In his response, the Executive Director thanked delegations for their statements and acknowledgment of UNFPA greater efficiency, and reaffirmed the UNFPA commitment to the management reforms that had been initiated.

81. He appreciated Board members' trust in UNFPA to continue the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, and called on delegations to adhere to a joint commitment to participate in the next General Assembly Special Session on the ICPD beyond 2014. He noted that the reaffirmation of the global community on issues related to ICPD beyond 2014 compelled UNFPA to continue working with member states to ensure that gender equality and human rights were at the centre of the new development agenda.

82. On the new strategic plan business model and resource allocation system, he assured Board members that the business model is indicative and that each country context is unique; UNFPA would exercise flexibility to avoid compromising the ICPD agenda. He reiterated his commitment to reduce early marriage and increase adolescents' access to reproductive health services as a means to improve maternal health. He also stressed the importance of sexuality education and its impact on the reduction of HIV, gender-based violence and maternal mortality, and underscored the UNFPA determination to continue working towards ensuring that the world's 600 million adolescent girls were given the opportunity and skills to understand who they were, and decide who they wanted to be in the future, as they had the potential to change the world.

83. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/9: Report of the Executive Director: Progress in implementation of the strategic plan, 2008-2013.

84. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/10: Strategic framework for UNFPA global and regional interventions, 2014-2017.

XI. Evaluation

85. The Director, Evaluation Office, presented the annual report on evaluation for 2012 and 2013 (DP/FPA/2014/7), and the Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA, presented the management response.

86. In her opening statement, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) commended the recently appointed Director of the new Evaluation Office on her valued expertise, and thanked the Board for their guidance in leading UNFPA to work on changing the culture of evaluation within the organization.

87. In her response, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) underscored the importance of solid planning and goal setting to achieve a virtuous cycle of improved performance and programme delivery. She also referred to the integrated resources and results framework that allows for close monitoring under new targets and indicators, and provides UNFPA with a robust tool to track results in real time, both at global level and country levels. She further noted that in order to improve evaluation, UNFPA was committed to embracing transparency and openness to scrutiny, these being core values that bring evaluation to the daily work of the organization.

88. Delegations congratulated UNFPA on the presentation of the annual report on evaluation, and stressed the importance they attach to the successful implementation of the revised evaluation policy, noting that it marked a turning point leading in the strengthening of the evaluation capacity throughout the organization. They were pleased to learn that the evaluation function is on track and look forward to close cooperation with the new evaluation office. They reiterated their appreciation of the structural independence of the evaluation office from management, and the fact that the transitional biennium budgeted evaluation plan for 2014-2015 indicates increased investment in this function.

89. On the issue of quality of evaluations raised in the report, Board members indicated their full support to the UNFPA plan to address the quality of decentralized evaluations as a priority, and welcomed the UNFPA proposal to implement quality assurance mechanisms at regional and country levels; they encouraged UNFPA to benchmark its evaluation function against external standards, and to consider a meta-level analysis of global thematic evaluations. Delegations also encouraged an external assessment of the office to maintain and foster high quality standards, through an external review group.

90. With respect to capacity building, they welcomed the priority attached to building capacity at the country level, given the level of concern on this issue in the report. While recognizing the challenges involved in professionalizing a dedicated evaluation service, they encouraged the development of incentives and their integration into performance management.

91. On building national capacity, delegations viewed the UNFPA partnership approach as very positive; while recognizing the limited resources available, they recommended further coordination on the matter with other United Nations entities; they welcomed additional information on the UNFPA assessment of the joint evaluation process. Some delegations emphasized the need to discuss management responses of joint evaluations at all the executive boards of funds and programmes concerned.

92. In response, the Director, Evaluation Office, UNFPA, welcomed the guidance provided and indicated that UNFPA was prepared to report back on progress against the policy and the budgeted evaluation workplan in 2015. On improving capacity and quality, including building national capacity, she noted that this was a complex issue that required professionalization across the organization, and would benefit from the drive to improve results based management. She concurred with Board members on their assessment of joint evaluations, and agreed that experience in this regard would enhance learning across the organizations involved and assured Board members that UNFPA would seek opportunities to pursue this practice.

93. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/11: Annual report on evaluation, 2013.

XII. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

94. The Director, Division for Oversight Services, UNFPA, presented the roadmap towards a revised UNFPA oversight policy (DP/FPA/2014/CRP.2) and delivered the management response.

95. Delegations appreciated the UNFPA proposal to revise the UNFPA oversight policy, and inquired whether a similar approach had been adopted by other United Nations organizations.

96. In her response, the Director, Division for Oversight Services, indicated that UNFPA was not aware whether other United Nations organizations were reviewing their oversight policy, and noted that the UNFPA need for change was greater. She thanked Board members for their support and called on delegations to support the approach for updating the oversight policy.

97. The Director, Division for Management Services, UNFPA, introduced the revised financial regulations and rules (DP/FPA/2014/9) and delivered the management response thereto.

98. Delegations commended UNFPA for the completed revision of its financial regulations and rules and for its efforts to mainstream the recommendations from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, noting the impact of the quadrennial review on UNFPA operations in many respects; they also noted that the Division for Management Services had done its best to take into account the recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

99. In this respect, they pointed out that UNFPA had taken an important step to further improve its regulatory framework. They valued UNFPA efforts to improve efficiency and transparency of operations, and indicated that high administrative standards are a precondition for reliable contributions from all sources.

100. Board members referred to ACABQ concerns regarding the elimination of the requirement for monthly petty cash reporting, and stressed the need for adequate provisions to avoid misuse of funds. In reference to ACABQ recommendations, they indicated their support for new flexibility to place funds in longer-term investment instruments, under exceptional circumstances, insofar as UNFPA would not need to make use of resources from its regular budget. They also raised the issue of "special accounts", and underscored the need to integrate these new options into accounting guidelines as essential to meet transparency standards.

101. In response, the Director, Division for Management Services, concurred with Board members on the need for adequate provisions to avoid any compromise on internal controls. He further assured delegations that the policy adopted in February 2014, following a comprehensive internal review, provided for more stringent controls over petty cash operations. He stressed the importance of internal controls for UNFPA, indicating that it was closely monitored by the Board of Auditors. On the issue of the use of the investment of funds, he assured Board members that UNFPA has provided for the necessary checks and balances, and that there is no utilization of core resources for non-core purposes, as these are retained in a separate account, excluding any possibility of overlap. He indicated that UNFPA would have the necessary accounting guidelines to ensure that transparency related to special accounts is complete.

102. The Executive Board took note of the Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions on the revision of the UNFPA Financial Regulations and Rules.

103. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/12: (a) Updating the UNFPA oversight policy and (b) Revised UNFPA financial regulations and rules

XIII. Country programmes and related matters

104. The Deputy Director (Programme), UNFPA, provided an introductory overview of the new draft country programme documents for Angola, Comoros, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, Tunisia and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of); and the programme extensions for Algeria, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Lebanon and Uganda. She informed the

Executive Board that all programmes were developed under national leadership through extensive in-country consultations with stakeholders, and had benefitted from a strengthened quality assurance mechanism, led through the UNFPA programme review committee. She highlighted steps taken by UNFPA to align country programmes with the new strategic plan, and reiterated the UNFPA strong commitment to achieving evidence based programme delivery.

105. Following, the Director, East and Southern Africa Regional Office; the Director, West and Central Africa Regional Office; the Director, Arab States Regional Office; the Director, Asia and Pacific Regional Office; and the Director, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office introduced individual country programmes from their respective regions.

106. Several delegations commended UNFPA for draft country programmes developed in close collaboration with national authorities, and appreciated that documents drew on lessons learned from previous cycles and were aligned with national development plans and strategies. They acknowledged highly valued technical support of UNFPA, its focus on young people, its critical role in advancing rights based family planning, its highly valued attention to obstetric fistula, its contribution to quality data analysis and dissemination, and its engagement towards reducing gender based violence. Among their recommendations to the various programmes, delegations encouraged UNFPA to further engage civil society organizations in building local capacities, to target both young men and young women in their programmes; to gradually shift responsibility for commodity procurement to governments; to contribute to building health sector capacity on fistula repair; to further scale up support to emergency obstetric care and to strengthen the ability to use mobile technology and e health applications in its interventions.

107. The following delegations thanked the Executive Board for considering their programmes and thanked UNFPA for its support: Angola, Comoros, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste, and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

108. The Executive Board took note of the draft country programme documents for Angola, Comoros, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, Tunisia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and approved country programme extensions for Algeria, Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Lebanon and Uganda.

UNOPS segment

XIV. Statement by the Executive Director and annual report of the Executive Director

109. The Executive Director, ad interim, UNOPS, presented the annual report of the Executive Director (DP/OPS/2014/2 and Corr. 1) and its annexes. In his statement, he highlighted UNOPS work with its partners in 2013 and the development of its strategic plan, 2014-2017, focused on sustainability, focus, excellence and national capacity building. Noting the recent UNOPS change in management, he stated that the previous Executive Director had left the organization financially stable, with a clear mandate and an eagerness to embrace reform and change. The new Executive Director, Ms. Grete Faremo, would assume her duties in August 2014.

110. In light of its ongoing strong performance, the Executive Director, ad interim, affirmed that UNOPS had the ability and responsibility to invest in improving services. The organization would stay relevant by adapting to changing environments, improving its approach to the transfer of knowledge and capacity by helping developing countries to arrange new kinds of partnerships and access innovative funding sources, including through the South-South cooperation. UNOPS was committed to the highest performance standards and had been awarded several prestigious certificates of excellence in 2013 in areas such as project management and procurement. UNOPS put a high premium on staff learning, focused on

maximizing its human and financial resources to ensure a more streamlined and efficient use of resources. Sustainability of change was key, along with the organization's ability to measure its results, especially in building national capacity through a gender equality and women's empowerment lens.

111. Board members commended UNOPS for its ongoing strong performance. They recognized the continued increase in UNOPS delivery during the strategic plan, 2010-2013, especially in least development and crisis countries. They commended the organization for its operational effectiveness and success in building national capacities in difficult settings. UNOPS work, they noted, played a key part in supplementing the work of other United Nations organizations. They noted that UNOPS had seen significant success in three out of the four overarching objectives of the 2010-2013 strategic plan, and encouraged the organization to explore with its partners ways to better address remaining challenges.

112. A group of delegations highlighted the importance of effective risk management for UNOPS implementation at country level, and looked forward to working with UNOPS and other United Nations organizations in setting up a common approach and guidelines to joint risk assessments, risk management and risk monitoring. They indicated that the commitment to conduct joint risk assessments entailed in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States should serve as a starting point for developing a common framework.

113. Delegations welcomed UNOPS leadership role in driving joint procurement and encouraged United Nations organizations to strengthen their collaboration with UNOPS and continue using UNOPS procurement services. They recognized UNOPS strong record in efficiency, effectiveness and transparency and its successes in sustainable infrastructure, procurement and project management, as well as its efforts to work through national systems to build capacities. They commended UNOPS for its 2013 awards of excellence, and for maintaining its financial health, clear mandate and lines of accountability. They were pleased with UNOPS creation of a sustainability marker and proposed that the organization set up a small corporate evaluation function that would report directly to the Executive Director. Such a function would improve knowledge management and enhance results-based management. They encouraged UNOPS to step up its efforts in monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

114. In response, the Executive Director, ad interim, thanked delegations for their continued commitment and financial support, and assured them that UNOPS would continue to focus on its success areas while improving its national capacity building activities. He assured Board members that UNOPS gave high importance to its corporate evaluation function, creating tools to track and learn from its implementation activities, and was focused on quality assurance and sustainability to minimize risk. On joint procurement, UNOPS was well positioned to play a bigger role, and was spearheading efforts at the policy and principles level to help United Nations organizations to function much better. UNOPS percentage of procurement support to United Nations organizations however remained relatively low, most of its procurement support going to governments and other stakeholders. But UNOPS was ready to increase that volume in collaboration with United Nations partners.

115. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/20 on the annual report of the Executive Director, UNOPS.

Joint segment

XV. Internal audit and oversight

116. The Director, Office of Audit and Investigations, UNDP, introduced the UNDP report on internal audit and investigations for 2013 of the Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) of UNDP (DP/2014/16 and annexes). The Director, Division for Oversight Services, UNFPA,

introduced the UNFPA report on internal audit and investigation activities for 2013 of the Division for Oversight Services (DP/FPA/2014/6, DP/FPA/2014/6, Add.1, and annexes). The Director, Internal Audit and Investigations Group (IAIG), introduced the UNOPS 2013 annual report on internal audit and investigation activities (DP/OPS/2014/3). Presentations were each followed by management responses, delivered respectively by the Associate Administrator for UNDP, the Deputy Executive Director (Management) for UNFPA, and the Acting Executive Director for UNOPS.

117. Board members commended UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS for their annual reports and welcomed progress by all three organizations on addressing audit related management issues, and on steps taken to address weaknesses in high priority areas. They appreciated the inclusion of information related to financial losses through fraud, and strongly encouraged all three organizations to also provide information on amounts recovered.

118. Delegations welcomed additional human resources approved for audit and investigation for the three organizations, and inquired whether the organizations consider they have sufficient resources to fulfil their mandates in this area. They stressed the need for effective oversight controls in regional and country offices, including measures to ensure compliance with policies and procedures for delegation of authority. With respect to investigations, they requested clarification on the reasons for closing certain cases after a preliminary assessment.

119. Delegations underlined the importance of risk management and looked forward to further strengthening of risk management culture and practice.

UNDP

120. Board members appreciated actions taken by UNDP to address audit recommendations, and welcomed additional information on the accountability and oversight mechanisms in the new UNDP structure. While the number of procurement related fraud cases remained an area of concern, member states encouraged UNDP to continue its effort to examine country and regional fraud allegation patterns, and consider targeting audit and investigations resources based on its risk assessment where needed.

UNFPA

121. Delegations acknowledged progress made by UNFPA in establishing the new Office of Audit and Investigation Services, seen as a vitally important component of a comprehensive internal and external oversight structure. They were interested to know how UNFPA will manage corporate processes assessed as high audit risk, and handle the implementation of the inventory management policy, also given its importance for the global programme to enhance reproductive health commodity security.

UNOPS

122. Delegations welcomed UNOPS efforts in the area of audit and investigations, and welcomed the steady improvement in the number of unqualified project audits, as well as the proportion of project audits with a satisfactory rating. Noting the additional measures taken by management to strengthen the internal control system, they also welcomed the absence of unsatisfactory audits in 2013.

123. In response, the UNDP Associate Administrator noted that audit recommendations had been reduced from 22 to eight, and those remaining would be closed by the end of 2014. She indicated that the UNDP structural review provides an improved platform for project management from regional hubs, thereby increasing functional alignment and overall accountability. On financial management, the UNDP clustering of services and increased attention placed on certification of financial staff is expected to achieve overall enhancement of this function. UNDP further noted that sufficient resources are available for its investigative function, provided that the trend in number of cases remains the same.

124. The Deputy Executive Director (Management), UNFPA, assured Member States that many change management processes reported in the annual report of the Executive Director addressed those processes considered high audit risk. On recovery of financial losses, full recovery had already taken place in two out of three cases; on budgeting for oversight and risk management, UNFPA was working within the approved budget, and called the Board to consider in its assessment all oversight activities, internal audit, evaluation, and management activities.

125. In his response, the Acting Executive Director for UNOPS informed that the vendor review committee was functioning well and that it had allowed agencies to share information on vendors under suspicion, and take action accordingly. On pursuing staff-related investigations, he indicated that critical cases were examined by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, and final decisions on disciplinary cases were taken by an independent judge; he added that UNOPS was committed to sharing information on legal constraints faced when exchanging information with partner agencies and to taking all steps within its reach to pursue cases.

126. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/15 on the internal audit and investigations reports of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS.

XVI. Reports of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS ethics offices

127. The Director, Ethics Office, UNDP, presented the activities of the UNDP Ethics Office in 2013 (DP/2014/17) and the Associate Administrator, UNDP, presented the management response. The Officer-in-Charge, Ethics Office, UNFPA, presented the report of the UNFPA Ethics Office for 2013 (DP/FPA/2014/4) and the Director, Office of Human Resources, UNFPA, presented the management response. The Director, Internal Audit and Investigations Group, UNOPS, acting on behalf of the UNOPS Ethics Officer, presented the activities of the UNOPS Ethics Office in 2013 (DP/OPS/2014/4) and the Executive Director, ad interim, presented the management response.

128. A group of delegations welcomed the reports of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS ethics offices and agreed that a strong ethics function was key to effective oversight. They commended managements' strong support of their respective ethics offices and encouraged them to continue to uphold their commitment, including through allocating sufficient resources to the ethics function. They stressed the important role that the ethics offices play in creating a culture of integrity and accountability throughout the United Nations system, especially given the importance of zero tolerance for corruption and the need to demonstrate the organizations' efficiency and effectiveness. They stressed the need to protect and encourage whistle blowers, and they requested the organizations to institute (or revise) policies that prevent retaliation against whistle blowers, providing for a limitation period of not less than six months within which to report retaliation. They urged the organizations to provide ethics training to staff at both the headquarters and field levels, and to take measures to track the effectiveness of such programmes. The delegations further encouraged UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS to harmonize their protection against retaliation policies among each other and with the other members of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations.

129. One delegation commended UNDP management for UNDP Ethics Office survey findings which indicated that staff were not reluctant to report misconduct because of any fear of retaliation. However, the delegation raised concern with the anecdotal evidence indicating that staff often did not step forward to report wrongdoing because of a prevalent perception that nothing would be done to rectify the matter, a perception exacerbated by the purported lack of visible, timely and/or punitive measures against staff involved in wrong doing. While commending UNDP for its efforts underway to address that perception, the delegation suggested that each organization undertake a similar effort to ensure any fears that may dissuade staff from reporting misconduct were adequately addressed.

130. The Associate Administrator, UNDP, assured Board Members that UNDP took the report and the recommendations of the Ethics Office seriously. On the staff perception issue identified in the report of the Ethics Office, she informed the Board that a working group led by the Bureau of Management and comprised of key representatives from the Legal Support Office, the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Audit and Investigations, and the Ethics Office had had their initial meeting to discuss the causes of the underlying perception issues and different possible steps to address the staff perception issues identified more effectively and proactively. The Officer-in-Charge, Ethics Office, UNFPA, likewise addressed the perception issue, assuring delegations that the Fund followed strict legal procedures and issued regular circulars to the staff setting out actions taken by the Fund on allegations of misconduct, and ensured due process for all persons involved. The Executive Director, ad interim, UNOPS, also indicated that UNOPS addressed each individual complaint seriously, issued regular reports on the status of investigations, and was undertaking an awareness-raising campaign for staff on ethics-related concerns. UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS all noted that they would take delegations' proposals for improvement into consideration.

131. The Executive Board adopted decision 2014/22 on the reports of the ethics offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS.